Ports and Shipping.

8. In my address last year I gave some statistics to show the progress of shipping in our four working seaports of Alleppey, Quilon, Trivandrum and Colachel. I gave you figures to show that in the six years from 1096 the percentage of Travancore sea-borne trade to the total foreign trade had risen from 12·8 to 32·02. During 1103, the year under review, the percentage was 31. This is in terms of money value. The apparent decrease in 1103 was the result of the reduction of the tariff values of copra, cocoanuts and cocoanut oil for the purpose of export duty. But the total volume of trade showed an actual increase. The tonnage of shipping kept pace with this increase. From the details recorded in paragraph 7 of the tenth chapter of the Administration Report you will see that the 100,000 tons by which the shipping of 1102 surpassed the tonnage of 1101 was maintained in respect of 1103, which showed a total tonnage of 972,361 as against 873,856 in 1102. I can also give you the figures for the completed years of 1927 and 1928. In 1927 the total tonnage which called at our four ports was 927,788. In 1928 it was 1,064,847 distributed thus: Alleppey, 814,588 tons, Colachel 105,372 tons, Trivandrum 80,075 tons, and Quilon 64,726 tons. You may find it interesting to see how the shipping at our major port of Alleppey compares with that of other neighbouring ports of some importance. For the year 1927-28 the tonnage which called at Cochin was 1,018,948; at Calicut 955,896; at Mangalore 317,062; at Tuticorin 1,051,175. A curious feature is the large difference between the number of vessels which called at Alleppey during 1928 and the number which called at these other ports in 1927-28. At Alleppey the number was 447, at Cochin it was 1,190, at Calicut 1,866, at Mangalore 3,373 and at Tuticorin 901. Considering the number of vessels in relation to tonnage the explanation for this difference obviously is that a large number of country craft (sailing vessels) of small individual tonnage called at the other Malabar ports. I find that in 1926-27 out of 1,707 vessels which called at Calicut only 342 were steamships while 1,365 were sailing vessels. The corresponding figures for Alleppey in 1927 were 307 steamships and 41 sailing vessels and in 1928, 366 steamships and 111 sailing vessels. It would seem therefore that the number and tonnage of steamships calling at Calicut, Cochin and Alleppey are about the same. Last year I brought to your notice statistics pointing to an increase of 197 per cent in the previous six years in the value of exports from Alleppey and 116 per cent in the value of imports. I am in a position this year to compare the increase of the trade of Alleppey during the past five years with that of neighbouring ports for the corresponding period. At Alleppey the increase from 1923-24 to 1927-28 was 148 per cent, at Calicut 37 per cent, at Mangalore 15 per cent, at Cochin 11 per cent, and at Tuticorin there was a fall of 12 per cent. Should any of you desire to examine further particulars, you will find them in the statements* I am having distributed for your information. So far I have dealt with Alleppey. Last year's figures showed that

Vide Appendix A.

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Trivandrum port came next in activity after Alleppey, Quilon third and Colachel last. In 1103 Colachel suddenly leapt forward to second position after Alleppey, Trivandrum coming next and Quilon last. There is an explanation for this sudden rise of Colachel and for the set-back to Quilon. The tonnage at Colachel rose from 42,095 in 1102 to 78,034 in 1103, while the number of steamships rose from 12 to 24. As between 1927 and 1928 there was an increase of about 45,000 tons of which nearly 30,000 tons represented ocean-going vessels and 15,000, coasting steamers. This sudden growth in Colachel port is due to larger exports of ilmenite and zircon sands, for the export of which revised arrangements were recently made with the principal firm working these sands to enable them to meet the growing demand. Quilon port languished owing to larger shipments of salt from South Travancore being diverted from that port to Alleppey and to the transport of salt by road as also owing to the growing reluctance of merchants to ship tiles and import iron, hardware and rice for want of landing and shipping facilities.

The Alleppey "mud-bank."

9. Some apprehension was felt over a phenomenon which has not been previously unknown at Alleppey port. In August last, following upon heavy seas and strong littoral currents from the south-west, there settled round about the pier some of the fine oily mud which is always in a state of suspension off and along the Alleppey coast and which ensures its smooth waters. This shoaling of the fine mud made it necessary at low tide for loaded cargo boats to be hauled out by mechanical means from the head of the pier into deep water through what I might call an emulsion extending a few hundred feet. Shipping was in no way hampered and by the end of the year conditions became normal.

Advantageous Situation of the Travancore Ports.

10. Before I pass from the subject of ports and shipping I may mention as a matter of general interest that the Travancore ports possess one great advantage because of their situation in relation to the ocean highways traversed by shipping between Colombo, Europe, America, Australia and the Far East with special reference to the Suez Canal. Ships need make only a slight deviation from their set course to touch India at one of the Travancore ports. For instance, Colachel is only nine miles off the main ocean route, Trivandrum only fourteen, Quilon only twenty-three and Alleppey only forty-five miles. Also apart from the time saved by the shortness of the detour, the period of stay can be brief as ships can enter a port, anchor within easy distance of the shore and stand out to the open sea again soon after loading.

Forests.

11. The natural regeneration of valuable species of timber was satisfactory. Artificial reproduction of teak under the Taungya system was equally encouraging. The year witnessed the largest out-turn in the exploitation of timber during the past quinquennium. Over a million

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